

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MOSCOW 16248 151550Z

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ACTION MED-03

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P 151311Z OCT 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9907

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 16248

STADIS

FOR M/MED AND EUR/SOV ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TBIO, UR, US

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR BLOOD SAMPLES OF MOSCOW RESIDENTS

REF: (A) MOSCOW 15173, (B) STATE 249011

1. IN MEETING OCTOBER 14 WITH VENEDIKTOV (WHO HAD BEEN UNAVAILABLE EARLIER) SCIENC COUNSELOR DISCUSSED WITH HIM THE POINTS PROVIDED IN PARA 2 OF REFTEL B, AS A FOLLOW-UP TO OUR REQUEST FOR BLOOD SAMPLES. VENEDIKTOV SAID HE WOULD PASS THE INFORMATION ON TO HIS SPECIALISTS, BUT ADDED THAT HE BELIEVED IT WOULD BE UNLIKELY THAT THE MOH WOULD HAVE ANYTHING USEFUL TO PROVIDE ON THE BASIS OF THE INFORMATION PROVIDED THUS FAR. HE OBSERVED THAT INCREASED LYMPHOCYTE COUNTS COULD BE QUITE NORMAL FOR EMPLOYEES AND DEPENDENTS RECENTLY ARRIVED IN MOSCOW AND THEREBY EXPOSED TO A NEW SET OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES. HE ALSO QUESTIONED THE PHRASE "COMPARED TO A LARGER CONTROL GROUP OF US EMPLOYEES." WHEN SCIENCE COUNSELOR RESPONDED THAT THIS PROBABL
Y

REFERRED TO A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES SERVING AT OTHER OVERSEAS POSTS, OR IN WASHINGTON, VENEDIKTOV COUNTERED THAT THESE WOULD NOT BE APPROPRIATE BASES FOR ESTABLISHING WHETHER LYMPHOCYTE COUNTS IN MOSCOW WERE OR WERE NOT NORMAL. HE CONCLUDED BY STATING HE HAD DISCUSSED OUR REQUEST WITH THE MFA, AND THAT FURTHER COMMUNICATIONS ON THIS REQUEST SHOULD PROCEED THROUGH THE MFA.

2. COMMENT: WHILE IT APPEARS THAT VENEDIKTOV WAS (AND PERHAPS
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PAGE 02 MOSCOW 16248 151550Z

STILL IS) WILLING TO HELP, IT IS EVIDENT THAT HE HAS BEEN PUT

UNDER TIGHT REIN BY THE MFA, WHICH PERCEIVES THIS REQUEST AS
A POTENTIALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE. END COMMENT

3. ACTION REQUESTED: ALTHOUGH IT APPEARS MUCH LESS LIKELY NOW THAT
THE SOVIETS WILL RESPOND POSITIVELY TO OUR REQUEST, THE EMBASSY
WOULD APPRECIATE A CLARIFICATION ON THE POINT OF
"CONTROL GROUPS" WHICH VENEDIKTOV RAISED, AND THE STATISTICAL
ANALYSIS OF BLOOD SAMPLE DATA MENTIONED IN REFTEL B. THESE COULD
BE HELPFUL IN A FOLLOW-UP WITH VENEDIKTOV. IN ADDITION, WE REQUEST
AUTHORIZATION FOR SCIENCE COUNSELOR TO MAKE A LOW-KEY INQUIRY AT
THE MFA, DURING HIS INITIAL CALL THERE ON PERSONNEL RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE SPECIALIZED BILATERALS. MATTERS HAVING PROGRESSED THIS FAR,
IT WOULD AT LEAST BE INTERESTING TO OBTAIN THE VIEWS OF THE MFA ON
OUR REQUEST. MATLOCK

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